CHAPTER
3
JUN MOCHIZUKI
THE CASE STUDY OF
VANITAS

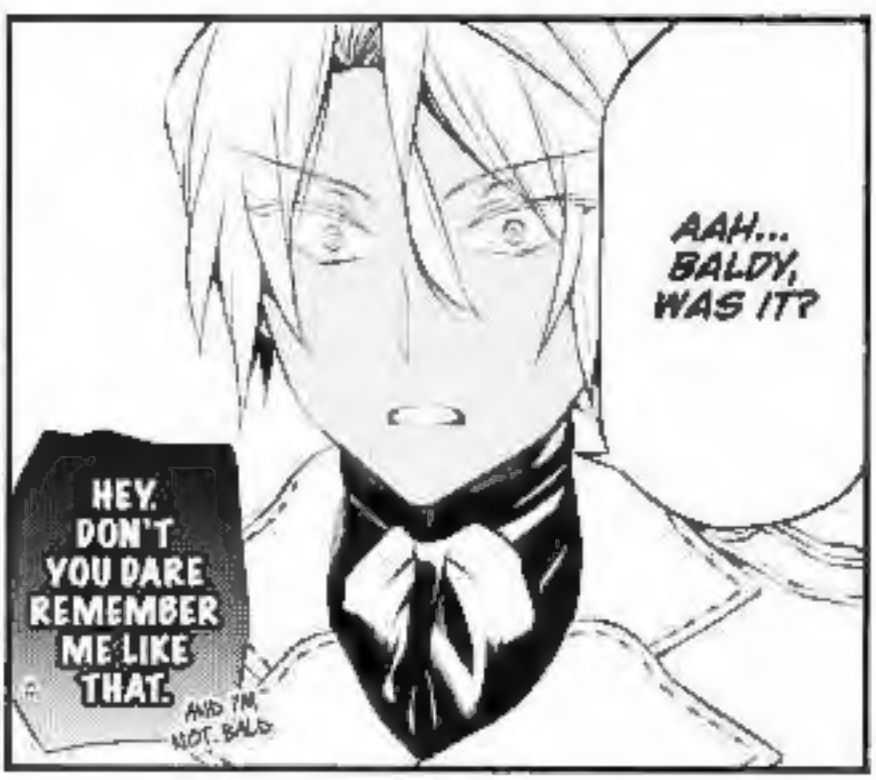
HEY, NOÉ, WAIT A MINUTE!
NOÉ.
WHAT!?
...DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE TO GO?
NO, I DO NOT !!!
OF COURSE YOU DON'T !!
I THOUGHT NOT!
!?
I'LL THANK YOU NOT TO PULL ON ME!
WELL, FOR NOW, CALM DOWN.

BASA
A BAT ...?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE, VANITAS.
BASA
BASA (FLUTTER)
HEY.
DANTE!
OH. IT'S THE MAN WHO WAS WITH VANITAS ON THE AIRSHIP ...

MISER!
I DON'T DO MORE WORK THAN I GET PAID FOR.
MY CONTRACT WITH YOU FOR THAT DAY DIDN'T INCLUDE PROTECTING THE TARGET.
YOU...(YOU LEFT AMELIA RUTH AND RAN AWAY BY YOURSELF, DIDN'T YOU!?
GALERIE VALE
CAN IT, QUACK!

WHOA! WHY'RE YOU WITH THAT LAD, HUH!?
HE'S AN INFORMATION BROKER I USE FREQUENTLY... OR RATHER, HE'S A JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES WHO'LL DO PRACTICALLY ANYTHING AS LONG AS YOU PAY HIM.
THIS GUY IS DANTE.
SIGH...
HM ...
I SUPPOSE I'D BETTER INTRODUCE HIM TO YOU, NOÉ.

SAY WHAT? HUH? THAT GUY!?
AH HA HA HA HA !!!
I'VE ALREADY FOUND A NEW "SHIELD" TO REPLACE YOU!!
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE, DANTE, BUT YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK!
AND I NEVER WAS YOUR SHIELD!!
NO, HE HASN'T.


AAH... BALDY, WAS IT?
HEY. DON'T YOU DARE REMEMBER ME LIKE THAT.
AND I'M NOT BALD

NO, I'M NOT.
HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT, DANTE!? UNLIKE YOU, HE'S THE PERFECT PARTNER!!
HE'S STRONGER AND STURDIER THAN YOU, AND HE DOESN'T COST MONEY!

IS THAT RIGHT? I SEE. THAT'S TOO BAD.
...
IF YOU WANT TO EARN POCKET MONEY, YOU'LL HAVE TO GO ELSEWHERE.
HEH.
I'M SORRY, DANTE, BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS.

JUN MOCHIZUKI

CASE STUDY OF VANITAS

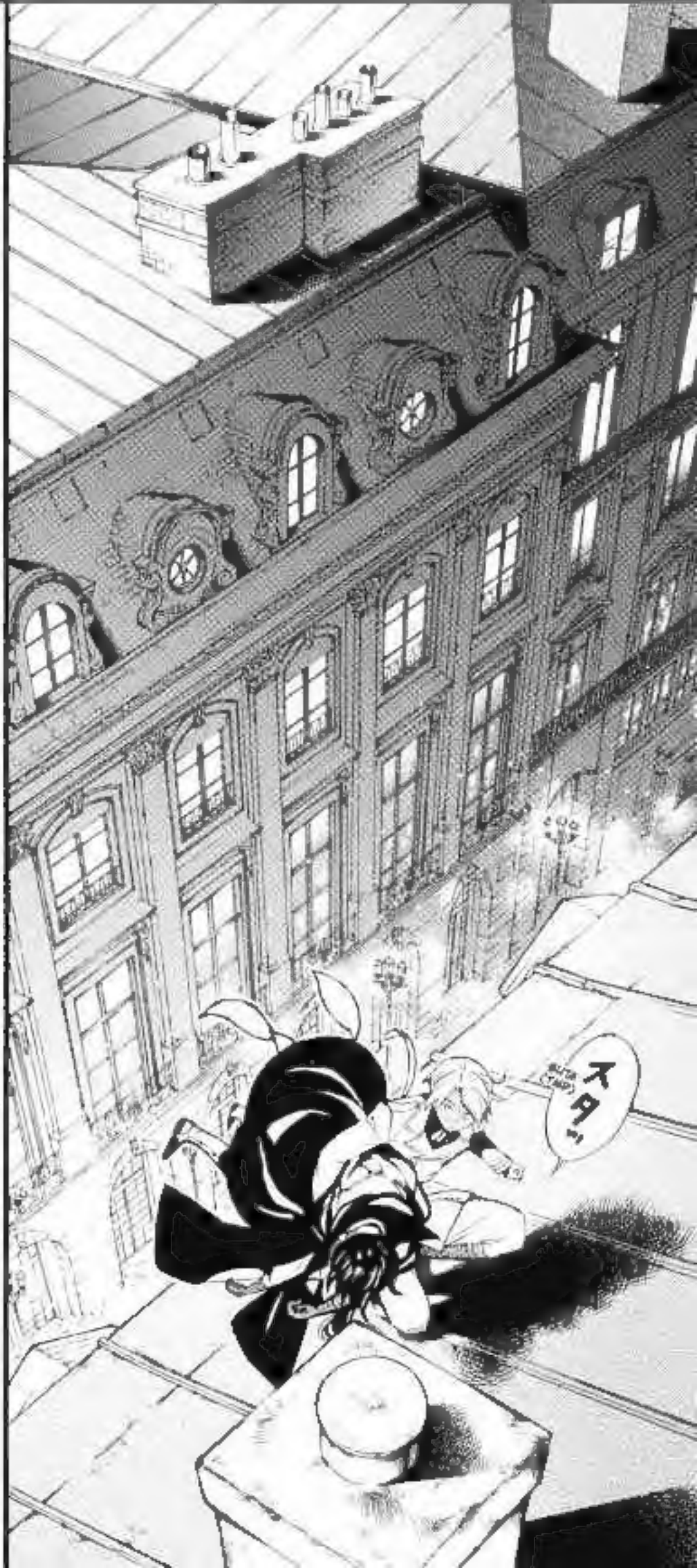
Mémoire 3 Jeanne THE HELLFIRE WITCH

YOU GOT IT.
PATA
WE JUST NEED TO FOLLOW THIS BAT, THEN?
PATA (FLUTTER)
SHADDUP! YOU THOUGHT INFO EVEN OLD ORLOK DOESN'T HAVE WAS GONNA BE CHEAP!?
YOU COMPLETELY SKINNED ME FOR THAT INFORMATION, BALDY!!
KYOKO
KYOKO (PEEK)
PE
PE (DTOOM)
...
RRGH
...
I SEE.
THIS LITTLE GUY WILL TAKE YOU TO THAT FRIEND.
MY FRIEND IS TAILING THE "NINE-FOLD MURDERER" AS WE SPEAK.
WHAAAAAA!?
!?
PYOON (BOING)
PYON
...IT WILL BE FASTER TO GO OVER THE TOP.
HUH?

ALL RIGHT.
LET'S HURRY, VANITAS.
UH...
UH-HUH...

PYON
PYON (WONG?)
...
SERIOUSLY, WHAT THE HECK IS THAT GUY?

IS THAT "VANITAS"?


スタ
(SUTA)

TCH!
...WHAT, YOU FOLLOWED ME?
HE HAS A PRETTY DISHY FACE, DOESN'T HE?♡
I GOT SOME EXTRA-SPECIAL INFORMATION, AND I CAME TO TELL YOU IN PERSON!
WHUH?
JOHANN.
MY, HOW RUDE.
LORD RUTHVEN'S BOURREAU IS IN PARIS RIGHT NOW.

HEE-HEE...
THAT FRIEND OF YOURS...
NO DOUBT THEY'RE AFTER THE BOOK OF VANITAS.
HUH ...!?

...JUST MIGHT GET KILLED...

THAT'S THE NAME OF THE VAMPIRE WHO APPEARED FROM BEYOND THE BARRIER TWO MONTHS AGO AND HAS DEVOURED NINE PEOPLE IN RAPID SUCCESSION.
BEG PARDON ?
"THOMAS BERNEUX."

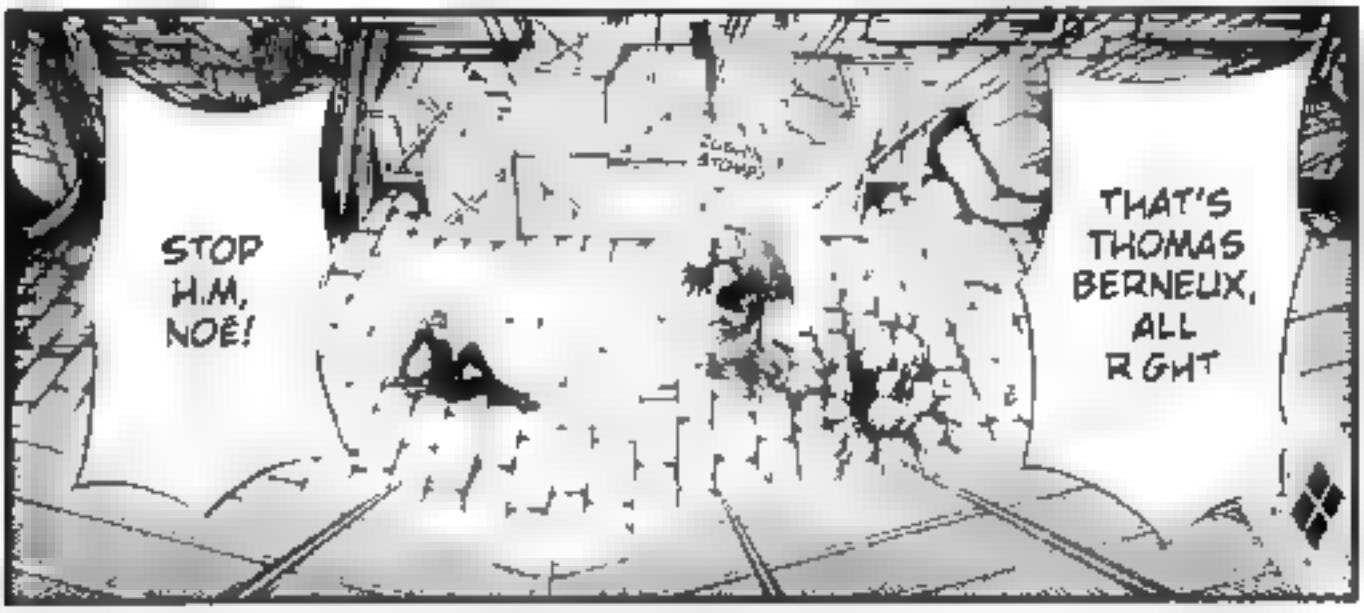
I'M... ON MY WAY TO SEE A DOCTOR NOW.
AH! THEN YOU WERE THE DOCTOR MLLE. AMELIA MENTIONED!
OUI.
I ALREADY HAVE INFORMATION ON HIM.
I'D BEEN CHASING THAT VAMPIRE RIGHT UP UNTIL I RECEIVED THAT LETTER FROM AMELIA RUTH.

...SO I PUT MY SEARCH FOR THE "NINE-FOLD MURDERER" ON HOLD AND BOARDED LA BALEINE, WHERE SHE WAS.
FROM WHAT SHE'D WRITTEN IN HER LETTER, I KNEW AMELIA RUTH'S SYMPTOMS COULD MANIFEST AT ANY MOMENT...

IF HE'S GOING TO ACT AGAIN, IT WILL PROBABLY BE TODAY.
HIS PREVIOUS CRIMES SUGGEST THAT THOMAS BERNEUX'S FITS ARE CYCLICAL.

HURRY, NOÉ!
THAT'S THE RIVERSIDE FACTORY DISTRICT.

! THERE!


STOP H.M, NOÉ!
THAT'S THOMAS BERNEUX, ALL R GHT

HUH!?
UNDER-STOOD!!

AAAA

ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME!!?
HEY!
NOÉ, KEEP HIM PINNED LIKE THAT!
AAAAH!!

WE'LL TIE HIM UP NOW AND TAKE HIM BACK TO ORLOK.
—I ADMINISTERED A SHOCK HE'S TEMPORARILY PARALYZED.

I'M GLAD WE GOT IT SETTLED SO QUICKLY.
GOOD...

HE REALIZED HE WAS BEING TAILED AND LURED YOU INTO A DESERTED AREA, AM I RIGHT?
YES. THANK YOU. YOU SAVED ME
ARGH
DHHHH
YOU MUST BE DANTE'S FRIEND.
DAN
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
DAN COLLAPSED
NOW WE'LL BE ABLE TO SAVE MADEMOISELLE AMELIA
AH
VANI-TAS.
TO THINK YOU'D SEAL A CURSE-BEARER'S MOVEMENTS INSTANTLY LIKE THAT.
THAT WAS AMAZING.

YOU'RE, *VANITAS,* CORRECT?

I'M LUCA.
HER NAME IS JEANNE.

OH EXCUSE ME
HUMANS? VAMPIRES?
WHAT'RE YOU TWO?
A CHILD?

IT'S IMPUDENT OF ME, BUT I'VE COME TO ASK A FAVOR.
MON-SIEUR VANITAS.
WE'RE VAMPIRES.

...THE BOOK OF VANITAS... WOULD YOU GIVE IT TO ME?
THAT BOOK..

NO!
THIS BOOK ISN'T A TOY FOR LITTLE KIDS LIKE YOU!!

THE BOOK OF VANITAS IS A CATASTROPHIC BOOK THAT WILL BRING DESTRUCTION UPON VAMPIRES
OF COURSE
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS?
WHY DO YOU WANT IT?
BECAUSE ITS POWER MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO INTERFERE WITH VAMPIRES' TRUE NAMES, IT HAS BEEN CALLED "AN ANALYTICAL ENGINE IN THE SHAPE OF A BOOK."
ALL THE WHILE, IT IS AN EVIL DEVICE THAT CREATES THE BEINGS KNOWN AS CURSE-BEARERS...!

...!?

OR... YOU YOURSELF MAY BE A VICTIM, AFFLICTED BY THE POWER OF THAT BOOK.
IT IS.
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY?
I'M SPREADING THE CURSE AROUND, USING THE BOOK OF VANITAS?

IF YOU ARE UNCONSCIOUSLY BEING USED BY THAT BOOK, IT'S UNFORTUNATE, BUT...
I'M TOLD THAT THERE'S A TYPE OF GRIMOIRE THAT TAKES CONTROL OF ITS BEARER'S CONSCIOUSNESS THE INSTANT IT'S PICKED UP.
WHAT ...?

AS ITS BEARER, IT'S LIKELY THAT YOU'LL RECEIVE APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT AS WELL.
.THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE CURSED IS TO DISPOSE OF THE BOOK OF VANITAS BY THE PROPER METHOD.

ALTHOUGH YOU'RE FREE TO DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE TO TH S MAN.. !
HEY.
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T KILL HIM!!
YOU CAN'T DISPOSE OF THAT BOOK!
WAIT, PLEASE!
AH!
I DON'T HAVE ANY TIME EITHER !!
I APOLOG ZE, BUT LET'S DISCUSS THIS ANOTHER TIME .
WE'RE IN A GREAT HURRY.
.SOMEONE VERY PRECIOUS TO ME HAS BECOME A CURSE-BEARER AND IS SUFFERING.
RIGHT NOW...

IF THE BOOK OF VANITAS DISAPPEARS, THERE WON'T BE ANY CURSE-BEARERS .?
WHO FED YOU THAT COCK-AND-BULL STORY?
I'M BEGGING YOU, GIVE ME THAT BOOK!
THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THAT PERSON IS TO RID THIS WORLD OF THE BOOK OF VANITAS.

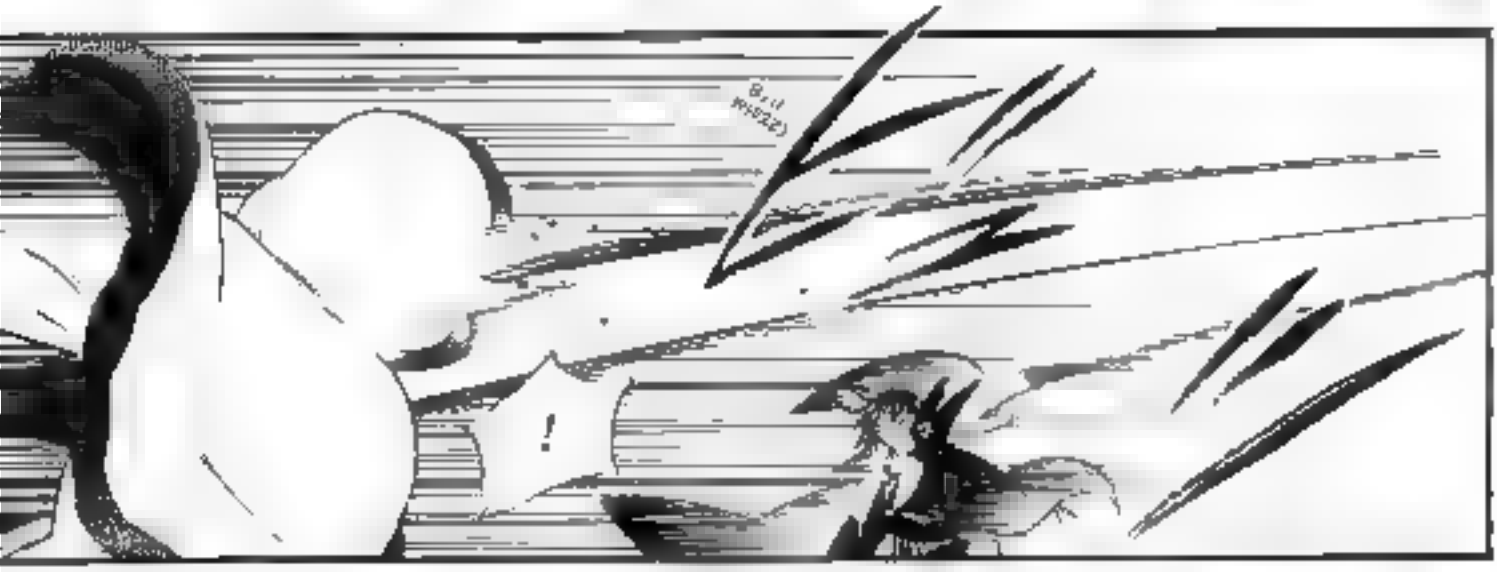
I'LL EXAMINE THEM AS SOON AS I'VE HEALED THIS PATIENT.
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR "PRECIOUS SOMEONE," TAKE ME TO THEM.
WHAT ?
LISTEN TO ME I AM A DOCTOR!
I'M USING THE POWER OF THIS BOOK TO SAVE VAMPIRES!

THE CURSE OF THE VAMPIRE OF THE BLUE MOON IS WHY MY OLDER BROTHER IS SUFFERING!
TAKE YOU TO HIM!? DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
MASTER LUCA.

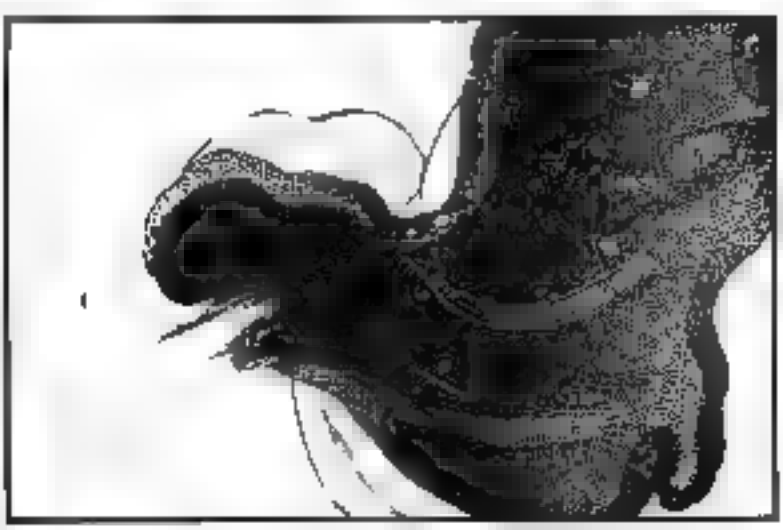
SO YOUR BROTHER'S BECOME A CURSE-BEARER?
HM.
HA (GASP!)

!?
"JEANNE"
!?
...FURTHER TALK IS POINTLESS.
MASTER LUCA...

PLEASE GIVE ME AN ORDER.


!

JEANNE !!



YOU WON'T GIVE US THAT BOOK, NO MATTER WHAT...?
MONSIEUR VANITAS.
JEANNE
..
..
PLEASE.
I KNOW. I'LL DO MY BEST TO TAKE HIM ALIVE.

OUI, VOTRE ALTESSE.
THE BOOK OF VANITAS ...
TAKE IT FROM HIM!

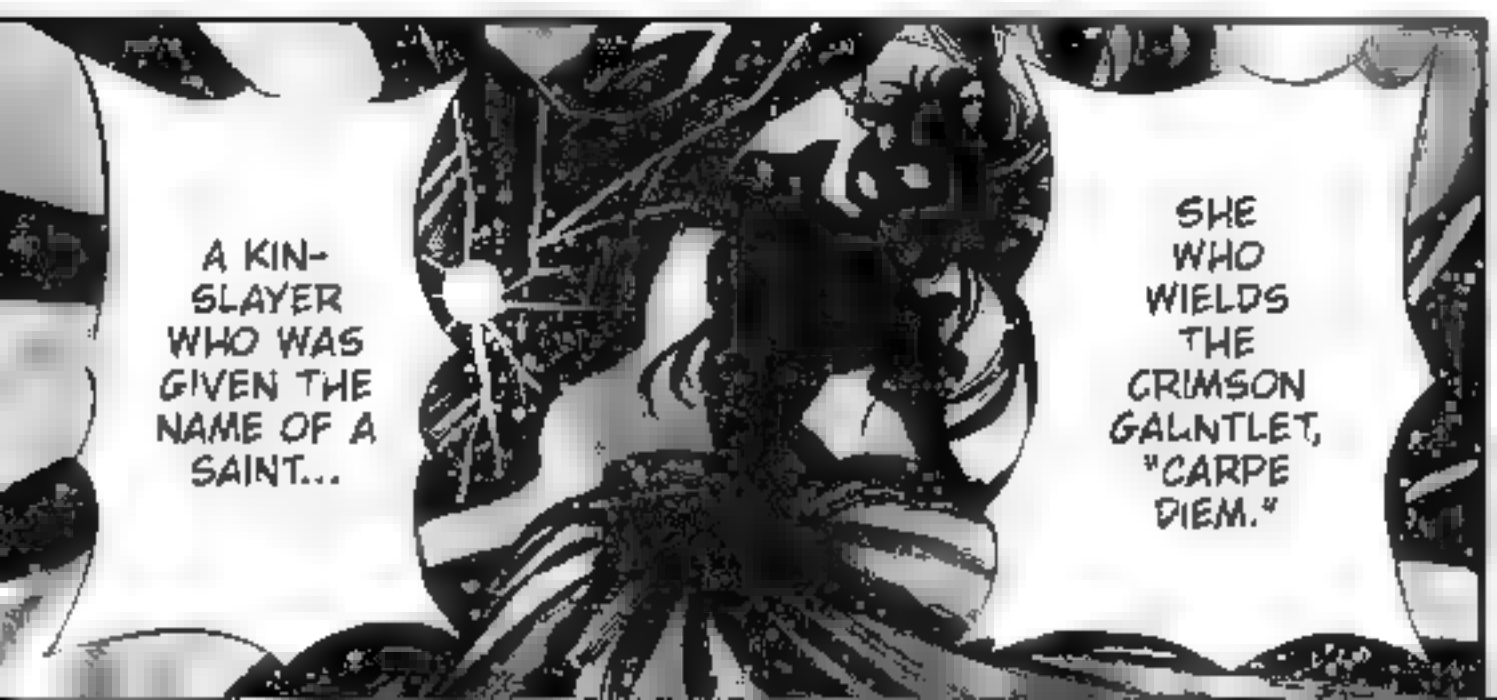
NOT GOOD WE'RE RUNNING NOW.
HUH ?
THAT WOMAN IS LORD RUTHVEN'S BOURREAU
A CRIMSON... GAUNTLET ...!!

COULD YOU BE ANY MORE OF A COUNTRY BUMPKIN?
HUH ...?

LISTEN TO ME!!
WAIT!

AH.

IT'S SAID THAT ONE SINGLE BOURREAU WIPED THEM ALL OUT!
DURING THE WAR LONG AGO, WHEN MORE THAN A THOUSAND VAMPIRES BETRAYED THEIR COMRADES AND SIDED WITH HUMANS.


A KIN-SLAYER WHO WAS GIVEN THE NAME OF A SAINT...
SHE WHO WIELDS THE CRIMSON GAUNTLET, "CARPE DIEM."

...THE "HELLFIRE WITCH," JEANNE!!

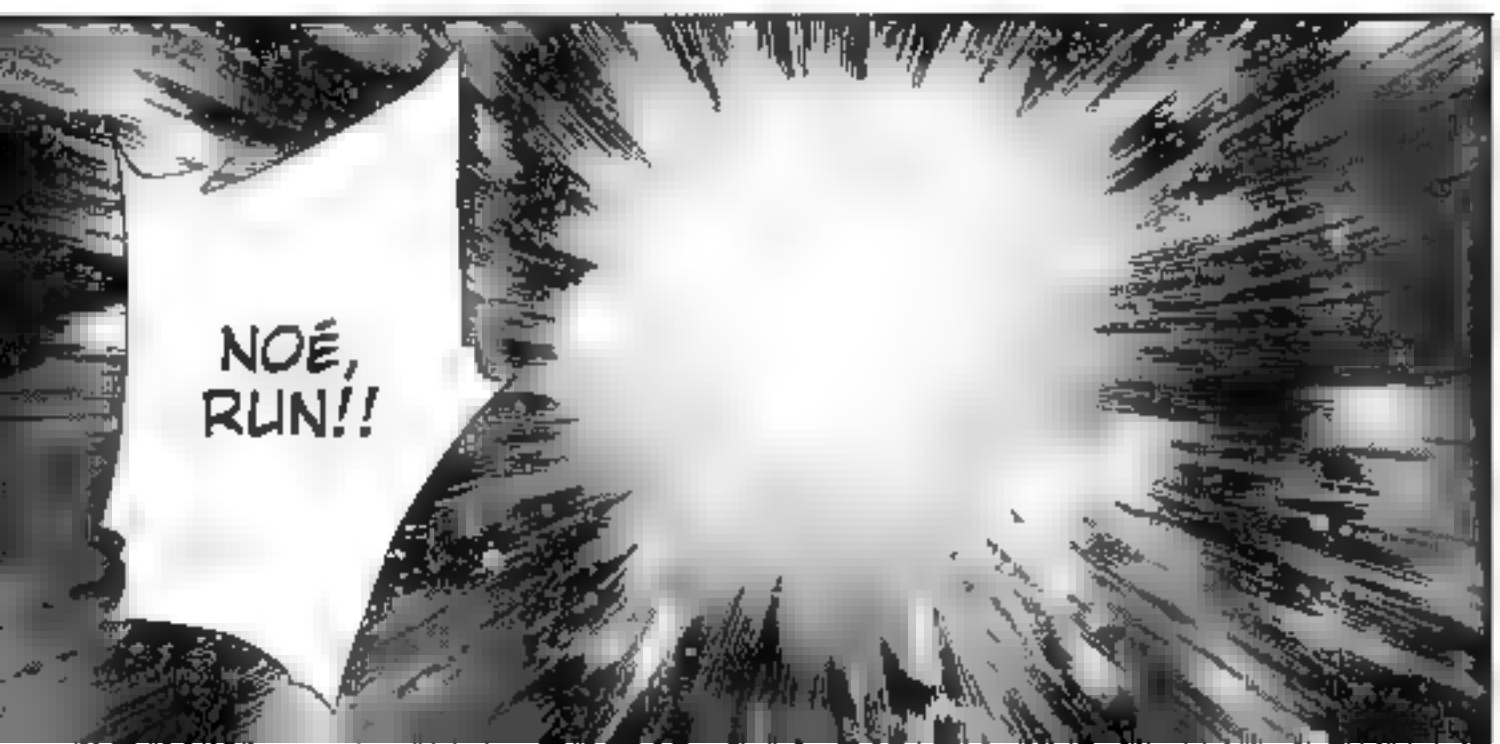
...THE SLIGHTEST INTENTION OF TAKING ME ALIVE !!
I DOUBT SHE HAS ...

GARA GLATTER

I CAN'T LET YOU DIE ON ME YET !
NOE!

!?

OH
CRAP.


NOÉ,
RUN!!

PARA
PARA

WHERE DID HE GO?

THIS IS NO TIME TO BE IMPRESSED !
THAT WAS AMAZING..! I'VE NEVER SEEN A WEAPON LIKE THAT BEFORE.

JEANNE !!
NOÉ!
GA RAKE
MASTER LUCA!?
YOU MUSTN'T KILL!!
JEANNE !
IT'S DANGEROUS HERE! HIDE SOMEWHERE SAFE, PLEASE!!
JEANNE

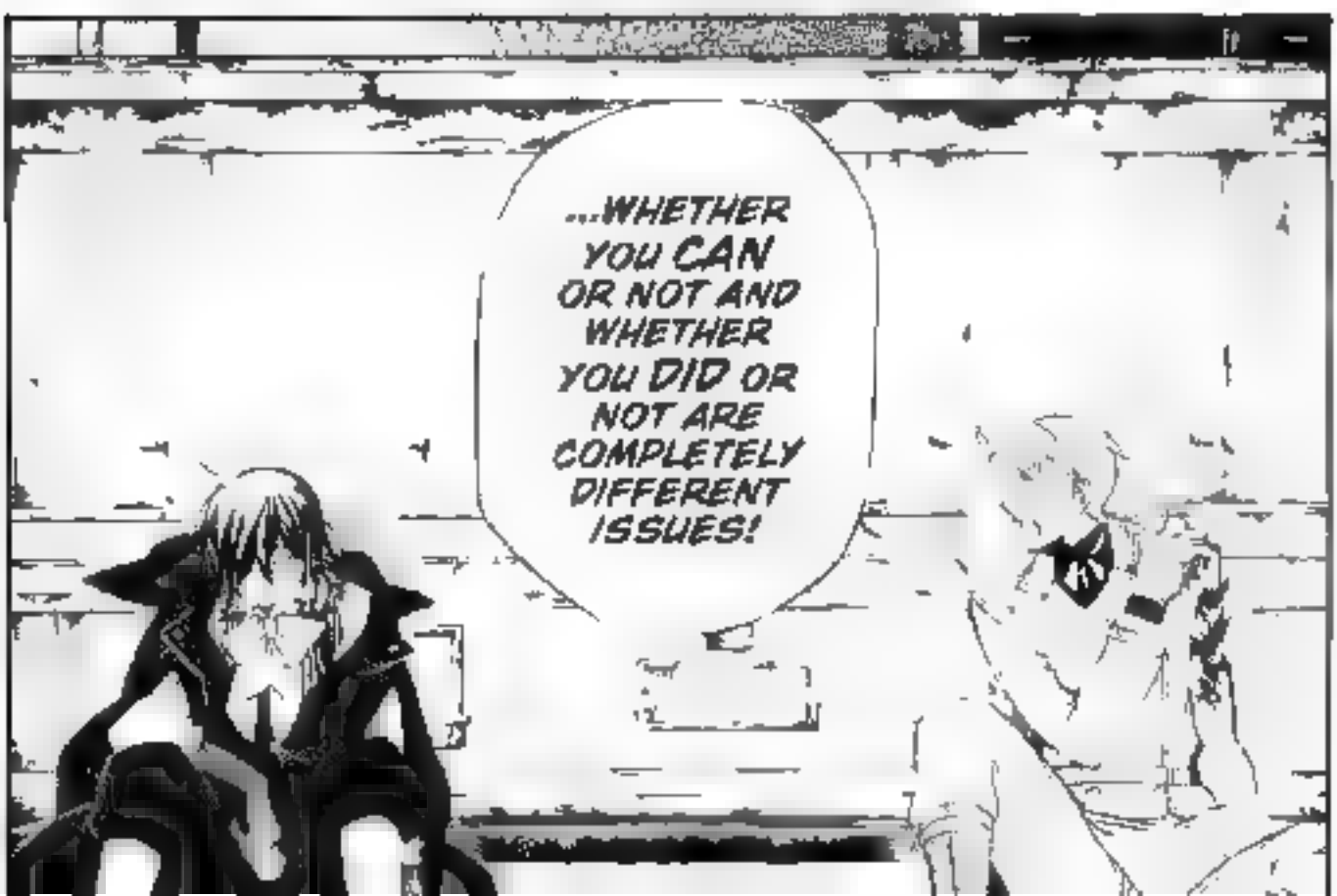
YOU'RE MY CHEVALIER, REMEMBER ...!?
YOU AREN'T A BOURREAU ANYMORE!

YES
I'M VERY SORRY, MASTER LUCA

FIRST COUNT ORLOK, AND NOW THOSE TWO . CITY VAMPIRES REALLY DON'T LISTEN WHEN PEOPLE ARE TALKING. DO THEY?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ?
THAT'S THE USUAL VAMPIRE REACTION TO THE BOOK OF VANITAS.
NOE TAKE OFF YOUR COAT I'LL STOP THE BLEEDING.
IT ISN'T A PROBLEM. THE BLOOD WILL STOP ON ITS OWN IF WE LEAVE IT ALONE
WELL. VAMPIRES' POWERS OF RECOVERY ARE FAR BEYOND HUMANS' BUT
AFTER ALL, MOST CURSE-BEARERS THINK WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEIR BODIES IS THE CURSE OF VAN TAS.
EVEN WHEN I FIND A PATIENT I DON'T TELL THEM ABOUT THE BOOK OF VANITAS OR GIVE MY NAME
- FOR THAT REASON -
IT'S NORMAL FOR VAMPIRES TO HAVE BOTH KNOWLEDGE AND FEAR OF THE VAMPIRE OF THE BLUE MOON DRUMMED INTO THEM.
HUH .?
WHAT THAT BOY SAID ISN'T ENTIRELY WRONG.
BE-SIDES
. . .

IT'S TRUE THAT THE BOOK OF VANITAS CAN INTERFERE WITH VAMPIRE'S TRUE NAMES.
IF THAT INTERFERENCE WARPS TRUE NAMES, THEY BECOME MALNOMEN
WHILE INTERFERING WITH MALNOMEN AND MAKING THEM TRUE NAMES AGAIN IS WHAT I CALL "TREATMENT."

...BUT...
THAT MEANS IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR VAMPIRES TO FEAR THIS BOOK.
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S ALL IN HOW IT'S USED.


...WHETHER YOU CAN OR NOT AND WHETHER YOU DID OR NOT ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ISSUES!

THANK YOU...!
EVEN IF THE BOOK OF VANITAS TRULY WAS MADE IN ORDER TO DESTROY VAMPIRES...
...IT'S AN UNDENIABLE FACT THAT YOU SAVED MADEMOISELLE AMELIA BACK THEN!

TO ME... THAT SIGHT WAS SOMETHING OVERWHELMINGLY "RIGHT"!

PFFT!
...I WANT TO HURRY AND GO BACK TO SAVE MLLE. AMELIA!
... AND SO ...

SFX: MUSH (SQUIRM) MUSH!
MRR GLL RRGH RR GHL LMR GH!
SERIOUSLY!? SHE'LL FIND US ...
HA- HA- HA- HA- HA- HA- HA!
HA- HA- HA- HA-!

WHAT ARE YOU SAY—
?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER IT'S GOING TO WORK, BUT... WELL, IF IT WILL LET US GET BACK FAST, WE HAVE NO CHOICE!
ALL RIGHT!
I'VE STEELED MYSELF, NOÉ!

I'VE FOUND ONE. JUST ONE.

A WAY TO WIN AGAINST THE HELLFIRE WITCH ...
TO BE CONTINUED...